

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Agency Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission Statement:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation works with Virginians to conserve, protect, and enhance their lands and improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay and our rivers and streams, promotes the stewardship and enjoyment of natural, cultural and outdoor recreational resources, and insures the safety of Virginia's dams.

Agency Vision:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation, with the cooperation of our partners and customers, is a leader in:

- providing tangible and lasting improvements to the quality of Virginia's resource lands and waters;
- serving as trusted stewards of the outdoor recreational and natural resources placed under our care;
- promoting the conservation and enjoyment of Virginia's diverse and unique environment and rich cultural legacy for future generation;
- protecting the public's safety through our regulatory programs and conservation law enforcement efforts; and
- recognizing the value of our dedicated and committed workforce.

Agency Executive Progress Report

Current Service Performance

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has significantly expanded and strengthened its stewardship programs and statutory responsibilities on behalf of the Commonwealth over the past few years. This section will summarize the progress made in each of the Service Areas.

Service Area 1 - Statewide Agricultural and Urban Nonpoint Source Water Quality Improvements

- DCR carried the Governor's initiative to consolidate the state's stormwater programs within DCR. The changes to the Virginia Stormwater Management Act were made to streamline stormwater program oversight by the Commonwealth by eliminating regulatory overlaps and consolidating responsibilities from three state agencies and four boards. As a result of this consolidation, stormwater management now addresses water quality and quantity on all regulated land disturbing activities statewide. On December 29, 2004, DCR received approval from EPA to assume federal permitting responsibilities called for under the new legislation. Program implementation of the NPDES construction and MS4 permitting programs began in January 2005. In December of 2005, the Department on behalf of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board issued a NOIRA to consider the development of minimum criteria for a local stormwater management program and construction permit delegation procedures and a NOIRA related to considering amendments to the program fees. A Technical Advisory Committee began work on the development of the proposed regulations in May of 2006.
- DCR has modified and strengthened its local government Erosion & Sediment Control Program compliance review processes. A schedule has been established so that all local programs will be reviewed in a 5-year period.
- In cooperation with the other Chesapeake Bay states and EPA, Virginia agreed to river basin allocations for Virginia Bay tributaries for nutrients and sediments, which will need to be met to promote Chesapeake Bay restoration. DCR, under the guidance of the Secretary's Office, completed coordinating a year-long public participation planning process to develop Tributary Strategies that when fully implemented will make the reductions needed to remove the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Bay tributaries from the federal list of impaired waters. A statewide version of the strategies was released in January 2005 and basin specific documents were released in March 2005. Based on 2006 Session legislation, the Department is currently working with the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality to develop a plan for the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia's waters designated as impaired by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The plan will include strategies, timetables, and milestones.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- Over the last few years, Virginia has been actively strengthening its working relationship with neighboring states in order to protect shared watersheds. We joined with North Carolina in the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program to restore the nation's second largest estuary system. This continued partnership helps assure the successful conservation of this national treasure. DCR has also been involved in fostering the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable. Additionally, as a result of assistance provided by DCR, the Big Sandy River Basin Coalition (Virginia and Kentucky) received confirmation from the IRS to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which will make them eligible to receive a broader spectrum of grants. The Coalition is also working to solidify a partnership with the Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission, an interstate water pollution control agency.
- In the Spring of 2005, DCR, working closely with key partners, held the first joint meeting of Virginia's Watershed Roundtable chairs and the Environment Virginia Conference in Lexington, Virginia. The meeting, also attended by other invited guests, served as a catalyst in helping regional roundtable leaders recognize their potential for affecting positive change for water quality in Virginia. A second meeting of this group was held at the 2006 Conference.
- DCR finalized changes to its Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations in January 2006. Amendments addressed phosphorus nutrient management requirements, timing of nutrient applications, and other revisions to improve the nutrient management program and better protect water quality.
- Over 1 million acres of Virginia's agricultural lands have had nutrient management plans developed since the inception of the nutrient management program in 1989. This record level is attributed to fifteen years of assistance, guidance, and funding from DCR. Substantial funding for this program has come from the federal Clean Water Act, Section 319, and Chesapeake Bay grants to Virginia's nutrient management program. Support has also come from federal agencies and our partners in Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- DCR has reduced nutrient pollution by providing state cost-share funds to 2,333 farmers and landowners for implementation of 4,935 Agricultural Best Management Practices. Additionally, between January 1, 2002 and December 31, 2003, over 471 streamside miles were protected through increased implementation of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This is one of the state's largest conservation programs. Across the state, 842 farmers participated, 471 stream miles were protected, and 11,064 acres benefited. DCR has also provided \$25,000 to match the \$25,000 committed by the Virginia Poultry Federation and Poultry Integrators to conduct a pilot Poultry Litter Transport Program. Recently, DCR and the poultry industry have begun a renewed effort to expand the litter transport program.
- In June 2000, Virginia established an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and committed to enhance the federal Conservation Reserve Program through added state incentives. Continuous signup for landowner participation began at that time. Virginia's program's goals aim to enroll 25,000 acres of forested riparian buffers, grass filter strips and restored wetlands in the Chesapeake Bay Basin and 10,000 acres of these conservation practices in the Southern Rivers (SR) region of the state. Early in 2004, Virginia fulfilled the 10,000-acre goal in the SR. Governor Warner and Secretary Tayloe Murphy supported expansion of the SR goal by an additional 5,000 acres. USDA approval and backing with federal resources was received during December 2004. Virginia's added commitment of \$2.25 million dollars will bring between three and four times this amount of federal monies to the Southside and southwest regions of this state.

Service Area 2 - Dam Inventory, Evaluation and Classification and Flood Plain Management

- In 2003, DCR consolidated the agency's dam safety and floodplain management sections into a new division to strengthen the linkages and implementation of both programs.
- In both FY04 and FY05, DCR brought 20 high hazard dams under state regulation for the first time.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Additionally, DCR took substantial action to prevent the imminent threat from failure of a dam in Augusta County. After repeated warnings from DCR and the Attorney General's Office went unheeded, DCR proceeded to make the necessary corrections to the dam.

- The Dam Safety and Floodplain Management Division has established licensing and permitting protocols and procedures. A database will be maintained by DCR with pertinent information on dams.
- The division's dam safety regulations are being reviewed to ensure that they adequately protect the Commonwealth's population without imposing an undue burden on dam owners. An Ad Hoc advisory group was formulated to study the Classes of Impounding Structures, § 4VAC 50-20-40 and the Performance Standards Required for Impounding Structures, § 4VAC 50-20-50 and Table 1 established by the 2002 Virginia Impounding Structures Regulations. In July 2005, the Board authorized the Department to file a NOIRA to begin exploring such regulatory amendments that were proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee. The Board also directed the Department to develop a legislative package that addresses dam safety repair funding strategies, enforcement tools, and non-compliance penalties. Additionally, the Board directed DCR to advance a budget decision package to address staffing shortfalls. In response to the Board's charges, a NOIRA was submitted in December 2005 and a Technical Advisory Committee to work on the proposed regulations was formed and held its first meeting in May 2006. During the 2006 General Assembly Session, the Department successfully advanced legislation containing dam safety enforcement tools and refined the administrative procedures regarding loans and grants from the newly named Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund. Additional funding for the program is still dependant on deposits to the Fund.

Service Area 3 - Natural Heritage Preservation and Management

- As of May 2006, the Natural Area Preserve System has grown significantly, 12 new preserves and 44 tracts have been added to the system since January 2002 for a total of 21,136 acres. The Natural Area Preserve System now totals 46 preserves and 41,256 acres, supporting 527 mapped locations of 310 different rare species and exemplary natural communities.
- DCR Natural Heritage scientists have discovered four animal species that are new to science. Additionally, six animal and two plant species were discovered that have not been previously found in Virginia. DCR biologists discovered 15 new sites for globally rare species. Since 1986, Natural Heritage scientists have discovered 23 species new to science and discovered 200 species never previously documented in Virginia.
- The Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment (VCLNA) is a flexible, widely applicable tool for integrating and coordinating the needs and strategies of different conservation interests, using GIS to model and map land conservation priorities and actions in Virginia. This new mapping tool is extremely useful for conservation groups, land use planners, and decision makers. VCLNA is being used for targeting and prioritizing protection activities, for assessing potential impacts of new projects on habitats, and for assisting with land management decisions.
- DCR released a report on the Status of Virginia's Natural Communities, Plants and Animals, and a Plan for Preserving Virginia's Natural Heritage Resources. The 2003 report is available on-line and provides detailed conservation information valuable to land trusts, citizens, natural resource agencies, and others interested in protection Virginia's natural areas.
- The Invasive Species Council has completed Virginia's first ever Statewide Invasive Species Management Plan, and brought new leadership and coordination to the invasive species issue. The Council launched a new website to provide coordinated invasive species information. The Council is set to sunset in June 2006, and discussions are underway to assure the past three years efforts and momentum are not lost.

Service Area 4 - Financial Assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- Effective July 1, 2005, DCR established annual contractual agreements with each of the state's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (districts) to better define state expectations with district delivery of Virginia's Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost-Share Program. Each agreement contains a scope of services which lists expected actions by districts as they locally recruit farmer participants and target BMPs that will address the greatest nonpoint source pollution problems. Further refinement of performance expectations is planned through annual agreements in the coming years. The Districts are and will remain a key partner in implementing Virginia's Tributary Strategies.
- The 2004 Appropriations Act directed the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and DCR to perform an analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) that are implemented through the state's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. DCR collaborated with its conservation partners and a technical advisory committee to collect the necessary information and develop recommendations that will refine and advance the Commonwealth's agricultural programs and cost share delivery systems. The final report identified potential improvements in water quality and soil erosion programs and considered more efficient use of cost-effective BMPs.

Service Area 5 - Technical and Financial Assistance for Land Management

- Pursuant to language in the 2004 Appropriations Act, the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department was merged into DCR, as the Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance, on July 1, 2004. Some staff reorganization has occurred to achieve administrative efficiencies, and legislation was passed in the 2005 General Assembly Session that formalized the merger.
- The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the regulations pertaining to the Act require that localities incorporate water quality protection measures into their zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and comprehensive plans. The DCR Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance (DCBLA) is charged with ensuring that all 84 localities in the Tidewater region of Virginia who must comply with these provisions are doing so effectively. The Act also calls for the provision of financial and technical assistance to help localities achieve those goals. In 2001, the regulations pertaining to the Act were amended, incorporating some significant changes in how localities implement their programs. The regulations had an implementation date of 2003. The regulations provide greater protection of the Chesapeake Bay and waters of the State by ensuring all streams with perennial flow are accurately identified and protected with Resource Protection Area (RPA) buffers. The regulations also call for greater local government oversight of encroachments into RPAs and for exceptions to the 11 land use and water quality performance criteria contained in the regulations. As of this date, all of the localities have revised their ordinances and established processes to ensure that the amended regulations are being implemented.
- Another significant requirement of the Act is that localities incorporate water quality protection into their comprehensive plans. All of the 84 localities have adopted water quality measures into their comprehensive plans. Through their compliance with the revised regulations and implementation of comprehensive plans that contain measures to reduce nonpoint source pollution, all 84 Tidewater localities make important contributions to DCR's nonpoint source efforts aimed at reducing pollutants to the Chesapeake Bay and waters of the State.
- Each of the 84 local governments that must implement the Bay Act will have their Bay Act provisions reviewed by DCR and the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board on a five-year cycle. A total of 29 compliance evaluations were completed through May 2006.

Service Area 6 - Preservation of Open Space Lands

- Land conservation is making significant advancements, due in part to the award of over \$12.7 million in grants in 2005 through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF), enabling conservation partners to

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

purchase and preserve lands. DCR serves as the lead staff agency for the VLCF. Since first receiving funding in FY2000, the Foundation has received 136 applications requesting approximately \$57.4 million in state funding. In total, the Foundation has advanced grants for \$21.4 million that protects an estimated 20,266 acres. This amount, plus the minimum 50% match, has resulted in over \$42 million invested in land conservation.

- The Department, in coordination with the Secretary of Natural Resources Office, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, and the conservation community, is working together to advance the Governor's 400,000-acre land conservation commitment by 2010, which includes the 350,000 acres needed to meet Virginia's Chesapeake Bay goal.
- The Department has recently hired a new land conservation coordinator to serve as the agency's liaison to Virginia's land trusts and conservation organizations, and to provide them assistance regarding grant opportunities and land conservation tools, as well as serve as a statewide clearinghouse for land conservation information. The position also responds to the public's requests for land conservation materials and information.

Service Area 7 - Financial Assistance for Recreational Development

- From 2001 through 2005, DCR has administered the award of 108 Virginia Recreational Trail Grants totaling \$5,457,552 and 57 Outdoor Recreation Development Grants (Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants) totaling \$7,907,962.
- Virginia's Recreational Trail Grants are available to private organizations, local governments and other government entities for providing and maintaining recreational trails and trail-related projects. The funds may be used for the development and construction of trails, maintenance and restoration of existing trails, and acquisitions of land essential to trail completion.
- Since 1964, Virginia has received nearly \$78 million from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). For Virginia's state and local parks, this amount, plus the minimum 50% local match, has led to an investment of over \$154 million. Virginia has typically received approximately \$2 million per year. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has dispersed those funds through competitive grants to localities to assist with the purchase and development of local parks, ball fields, trails, picnic facilities, boat access, swimming pools, and many other types of outdoor recreation facilities. In addition to local facilities, a portion of the LWCF monies, matched with state funds, have been invested in Virginia's State Parks. In FY06, after the introduced federal budget zeroed out the stateside LWCF funding, Congress restored funding to the program at a significantly reduced amount. The FY06 reduced amount for all states resulted in Virginia's apportionment being only \$615,971. Similar reductions to the program are anticipated in FY07. Unless restored, the reduction or elimination of federal funding will severely reduce the state's ability to assist local government recreation needs.

Service Area 8 - Design and Construction of Outdoor Recreational Facilities

- The 2002 State Park and Natural Area General Obligation Bond passed with a very favorable 69 percent support by Virginia voters. Forty-three construction projects at state parks are currently at various stages of implementation. These projects represent primarily construction of revenue generating facilities such as cabins and campgrounds, address health and safety considerations, and/or make improvements at parks purchased with proceeds from the 1992 bond referendum. Major new cabin and campground construction is underway at seven state parks. Other projects include constructing picnic shelters, constructing or renovating visitor centers, building new restrooms, and installing new water and sewer hookups at campgrounds. Three additional parks now have projects under design which will provide new cabin complexes. Also, the first equestrian campground in the bond package is under design.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- The first-ever cabins at Lake Anna State Park opened in July 2005. The park's first campground is also now complete and will open for public use this season. These will help turn the park from day-use to an overnight destination park.
- The new Wilderness Road State Park visitor center (dedicated in 2004) is believed to be the first Virginia state owned building to receive the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation. This highly recognized designation is a Green Building Rating System® that is a national standard for developing high-performance, energy-efficient, environmentally sustainable buildings. DCR is also committed to using "green building" techniques in at least one major new facility in each of its park districts.
- The Department inputted information on its 1,000+ buildings into the new Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment System (FICAS). This information will help refine the scope of facility deferred maintenance across the State Park System's facilities. The maintenance needs of the Department were found to be very significant in a 2005 APA report that placed DCR's deferred maintenance in excess of \$197 million, the 2nd greatest need identified in the Commonwealth in that report.

Service Area 9 - State Park Management and Operations

- The citizens of Virginia support and appreciate their state parks as evidenced by their growing usage of parks and their satisfaction with park services. In 2005, park visitation was 6,996,375, representing an 18% increase over 1999 visitation. The greatest growth in visitation has been by day users of parks, but a large number of projects currently underway to build and improve campgrounds and cabins in parks will lead to substantial increases for these services starting in FY07 as new facilities begin to open to the public.
- Since 1997, a customer survey of state park visitors has been conducted each year, and the results show a very high level of satisfaction. For the 2005 year, customers rated 87% of the survey questions as "good" or "excellent".
- In 2005, 14,134 park interpretive programs were offered, with program attendance of 238,636. By comparison, in 1995 the numbers were only 2,153 programs with attendance of 52,247. Environmental education programs for school groups grew from 9,000 participants to 38,769 during the same period.
- State parks implemented a Youth Corps program to provide youth an opportunity to accomplish needed natural resource projects in parks. Participants learn leadership and job skills and about park and natural resource related careers. The program consists of the Youth Conservation Corps, a three-week residential program for high school students with an interest in the environment and stewardship, and the Youth Service Corps, a three-week day program targeted to at-risk youth.
- As requested by the 2004 Appropriations Act, DCR completed a major study on state park fees and marketing. DCR was able to partner with Longwood University, Radford University, Christopher Newport University, and Virginia Tech to complete this study. The study found that Virginia's fees are at or near the top end of the scale when compared with neighboring states, offered some opportunities, and reiterated the need for state general fund support.
- DCR completed the Mountain version of the award winning Virginia State Parks: Your Backyard Classroom program for Virginia educators.
- As approved by the Governor and the 2005 General Assembly Session, the Department has completed its recruitment and hiring of 57 new State Park employees as part of a continuing operational rebenchmarking to address significant growth in the system's number of parks and facilities authorized by the 1992 and 2002 general obligation bonds.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- The Agency and its Division of State Parks has been advancing plans for the celebration of the Park System's 70th Anniversary in June of 2006. The Park System is also readying itself as a tourist destination during the 2007 Jamestown and statewide 400th Anniversary events.

Service Area 10 - Natural Outdoor Recreational and Open Space Resource Research, Planning, and Technical Assistance

- DCR co-sponsored a Southside Rails to Trails Workshop in November 2004 that provided 180 attendees with information about the benefits and techniques for converting abandoned railroads into recreational trails. The invitees were elected officials and staff of the 22 Southside Virginia counties and cities. A West Piedmont Trails Symposium was held on October 28, 2005 in Danville, Virginia. Over 125 persons attended the Symposium and field trips.
- DCR completed the 2002 Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP). This Plan has been recognized as one of the best in the Country and is being used by the National Park Service as a model for other states. The document is the state's comprehensive plan for outdoor recreation planning and open space protection, and is revised every five years. The VOP provides guidance to all levels of government as well as to the private sector concerning issues related to recreation planning and open space conservation. Completion of the VOP also makes Virginia eligible to receive federal Land and Water Conservation Funds through 2007. The Department is currently beginning analysis and surveys associated with the development of the 2007 plan. The Recreational Areas and Facilities Inventory has been updated and the Virginia Outdoors Survey will be completed by May 2006.
- DCR has completed master plans for the 34 existing state parks (twelve in the last three years) and is currently undertaking master plans for two new parks (Powhatan and High Bridge). Additionally, DCR has completed the required 5-year review of the master plans for eight state parks.
- The Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation has recommended approval of a major amendment to the Occaneechee State Park master plan to allow a conference/educational center and restaurant to be located in the state park. This is the result of an invitation from Governor Warner to the town of Clarksville and others to work with DCR and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade to submit a proposal for such a complex. The master plan amendment language was sent to members of the General Assembly for a 30-day review and subsequently approved by the DCR Director and the U.S. Corps of Engineers (the Corps is involved since the state of Virginia leases the land from the Corps).
- DCR played a major role in obtaining funds from the National Park Service's Gateways Program for the study to verify the exploratory trips of Captain John Smith on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. This information will play a critical role in the development of the Captain John Smith Water Trail, which is one of the initiatives that come out of the 2003 Governor's Natural Resources Leadership Summit. It is anticipated that the James River section will be completed in Spring 2006 and the York River segment will be completed during the Fall of 2006. The release of a poster depicting the James River section has been a great success and has had broad distribution to public schools. Funding levels will determine whether roadside and interpretive site signage for the trail will be available in time for the 2007 commemoration.
- DCR co-hosted the 2005 Governor's Conference on Greenways, Blueways and Trails in Richmond. This four-day event, attended by approximately 450 people, provided extensive training on the funding, design, construction, maintenance and operation of greenways, blueways, and trails. Field trips demonstrated successful projects, tools, and techniques.
- DCR staff had the lead in developing the new Chesapeake Bay Public Access Guide which was completed and distributed in February 2006.
- Between January 2004 and June 2006, DCR staff have studied 575 miles of potential scenic byways, of which

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

290 miles have been designated as scenic byways. Additionally, a 37 miles section of the Meherrin River was studied to determine if it qualified for scenic river designation. It was found to qualify and was designated by the 2006 General Assembly as a state scenic river.

- A study was conducted of the Clinch River in Russell County to determine the recreational potential and a report was completed in October 2005.
- A Recreation Department Assessment was completed for the Nelson County Recreation and Parks Department in December 2005. This is part of DCR's assistance to local recreation planning.

Service Area 11 - Administrative and Support Services

- The agency's board infrastructure continues to improve with the reorganization and the merger and elimination of a number of boards. Legislation during the 2003 Session eliminated 20 of DCR's boards and transferred their responsibilities to other entities (eliminated 18 scenic river local boards in favor of a single Virginia Scenic River state board; eliminated the Virginia State Parks Foundation and the Board on Conservation and Development of Public Beaches and transferred their responsibilities to the Board of Conservation and Recreation). We also strengthened the membership and responsibilities of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. DCR has improved communication among the Board members and increased awareness of the importance of their roles in furthering the Commonwealth's goals and the Department's programs.
- DCR played a major role in the initiation and development of the Governor's Natural Resources Leadership Summit held in April 2003 and the resulting Partnership Agenda. Over 150 persons attended the two-day working conference.
- The Stewardship Virginia Campaign was established by DCR in 2002 for the Governor and the Natural Resources Secretariat to encourage volunteers to participate in a stewardship projects in their communities, parks, and neighborhoods. In 2004, the campaign was expanded to include Spring and Fall components. Last year more than 16,500 volunteers participated in 381 registered projects on state, local, and privately owned lands.
- In 2003, DCR received its first (known) APA Audit report with no findings reported. Since then, the Department has been continued to excel in its fiscal and administrative management reviews. In 2004, DCR received another APA Audit report with no findings reported.
- DCR continues to maintain an excellent prompt payment compliance percentage that has exceeded 98% for the last five fiscal years.
- DCR has been highly successful in complying with new administrative initiatives. 312 employees have signed up for electronic travel reimbursement (REDI). Also, 141 employees have enrolled in Payline and opted out of receiving their centrally printed Earnings Notice, saving the Commonwealth money. And DCR has fully engaged in Reportline (transitioning from Paper CARS Reports to Electronic reports), giving key financial staff access to DCR financial data sooner.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Productivity

DCR's productivity has increased markedly over time. Over the past four years, DCR has provided expanded services in its water quality improvement programs, land and heritage resource preservation efforts, enhancements to its state park system facilities and programs, strengthening of dam safety permitting procedures and enforcement tools, and enforcement of Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act provisions.

- Productivity remains high; DCR has been charged with significantly more responsibility over the past four years with very little new staff provided. New state park staffing provided during the 2005 General Assembly Session have been filled to support our delivery of services.
- Non-profits and citizens groups are becoming increasingly involved in volunteer activities in cleaning up streams and rivers and assisting within our state park system, natural area preserves and with water quality improvement programs. Volunteers increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency.
- While state parks clearly contribute to the quality of life for Virginians, there are proven economic benefits provided by the parks as well. Annually, state park visitors contribute approximately \$155 million to local economies as well as revenue to the State Park System. In 2005, park visitation was 6,996,375, representing an 18% increase over 1999 visitation. The greatest growth in visitation has been day users. The building and improvement projects currently underway in campgrounds and cabins will increase overnight facilities in 2007. Since 1997, park visitors have indicated a very high level of satisfaction with park facilities, services, and offerings on customer surveys.
- DCR's Natural Heritage staff respond to thousands of requests each year for information on rare plant and animal species and natural communities to be used in public and private sector land conservation and land planning decisions. A new Internet mapping service has been developed and deployed to allow land trusts, consulting firms, local, state, and federal agencies and others to view site specific natural heritage information, and to develop their own online and printable maps.
- DCR has made significant land conservation progress with the addition of 12 new natural area preserves and 21,136 acres in the past four and one-half years. New and strengthened partnerships with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and the land trust community is extending the conservation of Virginia's rich natural heritage.
- DCR has made significant advancements in protecting the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia's waterways through the implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, Nutrient Management regulations, stormwater laws, erosion and sediment control laws, and the TMDL plans. The newly streamlined and consolidated state stormwater management program is being currently administered by DCR largely through permit fees that fund the program. DCR will eventually split those fees with localities which administer the program. DCR has also been encouraging private sector involvement in delivery of programs, whenever possible, in order to lessen the need for state supported positions.
- DCR works closely with the Soil and Water Conservation Board to annually provide funding to Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and to annually review and adjust the criteria used to ensure optimal distribution of the available funds to increase the efficient delivery of Virginia's agricultural cost share program.
- The DCR Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance has continued to provide technical assistance to localities by reviewing hundreds of site plans for new development projects, has distributed \$100,000 in grant funds to assist rural localities with septic tank pump out programs and buffer restoration projects, and conducted training on ways to minimize encroachments into Resource Protection Areas, and methods for identifying perennial streams, which must be protected by a 100-foot buffer.

- The Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department (CBLA) was merged into DCR on July 1, 2004. The merger

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

coincided with the reduction of staffing and funding for the CBLA program. Additional efficiencies were achieved through some staff re-assignments within the Department. Service delivery, however, has remained very high throughout. A study by the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission and a survey by the Secretary of Natural Resources of Bay Act localities demonstrated a strong level of confidence in and positive support for the Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance staff.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Major Initiatives and Related Progress

DCR has a number of initiatives underway to protect and improve the Commonwealth's natural resources and outdoor recreation, to protect public safety, and to better serve the Department's constituencies. Initiatives and related progress include:

- DCR now provides owners of regulated dams advance written notification when their operating certificate expires and provides instructions on how to apply for a new operation and maintenance certificate. In December 2005, the agency filed a NOIRA to begin the first comprehensive review of the state's dam safety regulations.
- DCR has recently finalized changes to its Nutrient Management and Training Certification Regulations. Amendments address phosphorus nutrient management requirements, timing of nutrient applications and other revisions to improve the nutrient management program and better protect water quality.
- The Department filed two NOIRA's to continue improvements to Virginia's stormwater management program in December 2005 and a technical advisory committee to develop proposed regulations was formed and held its first meeting in May of 2006.
- In order to promote a better understanding among localities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed of various techniques to reduce pollutants from new development, DCR's Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance will be conducting the Clarity Land Use and Water Quality Workshop series. Topics covered will include the integration of watershed management plans into local land use ordinances and policies, low impact development, and riparian buffer management. The target audience includes local planners and engineers. The workshops will be held from June through September.
- DCR's Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance is working on the development of a guidance document on how to identify wetlands that are contiguous and connected by surface flow to perennial streams as required under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.
- Forty-three construction projects at state parks are currently underway or in a various stages of completion as a result of the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB). These projects represent primarily construction of revenue generating facilities, such as cabins and campgrounds, address health and safety considerations, or make improvements at parks purchased with proceeds from the 1992 bond referendum. Major new cabin and campground construction is underway at 7 state parks. Other projects include constructing picnic shelters, constructing or renovating visitor centers, building new restrooms, and installing new water and sewer hookups at campgrounds. All projects funded by the 2002 General Obligation Bond will be completed or under construction by December 2010. During FY06, the Department plans on opening for public use many of the new facilities.
- Land protection has been a major initiative of the agency. Both 2002 General Obligation Bond monies (\$36.5 M) and 2002 VPBA monies (\$20 M) are being utilized to purchase new state parks and natural area preserves. This coupled with legislative initiatives to transfer land to the Department has or soon will result in new park properties at Beaumont, Seven Bends, High Bridge, and the Middle Peninsula. Similarly new Natural Area Preserves have been added at Cherry Orchard Bog (Prince George and Sussex Counties), Clover Hollow (Giles County), Difficult Creek (Halifax County), Ellick Woodlands (Fairfax County), Grayson Glades (Grayson County), Mount Joy Pond (Augusta County), Mutton Hunk Fen (Accomack County), Red Rock Mountain (Smyth County), and Unthanks Cave (Lee County). The Department has also been providing support to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. Over \$12.7 million in grants were awarded in 2005 through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) enabling conservation partners to purchase and preserve lands. These grants, with at least 50% local match, have helped families keep their farmland, protect sensitive, historic and cultural lands, provide localities with additional recreational lands, provide additional hunting and fishing opportunities, etc.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- The Division of State Parks received 57 new positions as a result of 2005 General Assembly actions. All of the positions have been filled.
- DCR is expanding its use of technology to facilitate the delivery of services in many areas including the Responsible Land Disturber testing, certification, and payment, and for private sector registration in the Stormwater Management Plan. The Department's Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment (VCLNA) is a flexible, widely applicable tool for integrating and coordinating the needs and strategies of different conservation interests, using GIS to model and map land conservation priorities and actions in Virginia.
- The Division of Planning and Recreational Resources is providing technical assistance, sponsoring symposiums and workshops to help local governments, organizations, and officials convert 370 miles of abandoned railroad corridors into trails in the 22 south side counties.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Virginia Ranking and Trends

DCR activities are regularly benchmarked against other states' activities and standings in a number of areas. Examples of these include:

- DCR has been positively recognized for its programs and operations even though Virginia typically ranks low in natural resources per capita funding comparisons with other southeastern states.
- During the recent Enterprise Business Modeling efforts conducted by VITA, DCR was described as among the most diverse and complex agencies in state government.

DCR has received awards and recognitions in a number of areas. These include:

- The 2002 Virginia Outdoors Plan was recognized as the best plan in the country by the Conservation Fund. The National Park Service currently uses this plan as a model for other states.
- The Virginia State Parks System was awarded the prestigious 2001 Gold Medal Award for being the best managed State Park System in the country.
- The Outstanding Heritage Program Award given by The Nature Conservancy has recognized Virginia's Natural Heritage Program as the best in the hemisphere. Additionally, the Natural Heritage Program received the 2006 Outstanding Natural Heritage Program Conservation Impact Award given by NatureServe.
- Many individual staff members have been singled out for recognition by various professional organizations.
- The new Wilderness Road State Park visitor center (dedicated in 2004) is believed to be the first Virginia state owned building to receive the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation. This highly recognized designation is a Green Building Rating System® that is a national standard for developing high-performance, energy-efficient, environmentally sustainable buildings. DCR is also committed to using "green building" techniques in at least one major new facility in each of its park districts.
- Virginia became the first State to have its State Park System listed on www.Recreation.gov, the site established by the Federal government as a one-stop source of information on all government operated parks.
- Wilderness Road State Park was awarded the Virginia Recreation and Park Society's Best New Program for "Raid at Martin's Station," a Living History Program Interpreting Life on America's Frontier in 1775.
- Kiptopeke State Park received the Jackson M. Abbot Conservation Award from the Virginia Society of Ornithology for conservation of birding habitat.
- Virginia's state parks were rated among the nation's highest by 2005 Camping Life Magazine. Four Virginia parks received a Top 100 Family Campground designation (Douthat State Park, Chippokes Plantation State Park, Kiptopeke State Park, and Pocahontas State Park). Additionally, awards included: Top 10 Fishing Spots (Kiptopeke State Park), Top 10 Scenic Views (Raymond R. "Andy" Guest Jr./Shenandoah River State Park), and Top 5 Kid Friendly parks (Douthat State Park).
- Hungry Mother dam received a designation in 2005 for "Best Maintained State Dam" by the Virginia Lakes and Watersheds Association.
- The Virginia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society has recognized DCR staff for the development of a statewide watershed delineation system meeting national standards. The Virginia Chapter also recognized staff in 2003 with a Merit award for the development of Virginia's Citizen's Monitoring Guide.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- The Virginia Poultry Federation recognized DCR with an Environmental Excellence award.
- For assistance in hosting the Seventh National Watershed Conference, DCR was recognized by the National Watershed Coalition for exceptional assistance.

Customer Trends and Coverage

DCR anticipates some changes to its customer base due to program expansion and growing citizen awareness and interest. Changes may include:

- Increased citizen, farmer, local governments, and other stakeholders involvement in Chesapeake Bay and Southern River restoration activities through development and participation in Tributary Strategies and other water quality initiatives.
- Increased involvement with members of the construction industry that require land disturbing permits under the Department's expanded stormwater program.
- Increased demands for instant access to accurate and comprehensive conservation information from the rapidly expanding local land trust community, land conservation organizations, local, state, and federal governments, and the general public.
- Increased public awareness of conservation issues will lead to an increased demand for educational outreach programs such as Karst education, park interpretive programs, and environmental education programs.
- Increased demand statewide for conveniently located outdoor recreational opportunities will result in increased demand for fiscal and technical support for parks, greenways, blueways and trail development.
- Increased usage of DCR's Natural Area Preserve System and the State Park System will create increased demands for public access, facilities, programs, and operational support.
- High expected development pressure in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed will increase the need for technical assistance to localities (particularly rural ones) to assist with compliance of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, revised Stormwater Management regulations, tributary strategies, and TMDL implementation requirements.
- Due to legislation effective in 2002, hundreds of private and public dam owners require additional assistance and regulatory oversight from DCR.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Future Direction, Expectations, and Priorities

With Virginia's population continuing to grow, pressures on the Commonwealth's natural resources will mount, and expectations from the public for recreational opportunities, clean waters, land protection, preservation of our heritage resources, and protection of life and property will continue to expand.

- Controlling nonpoint source pollution from agricultural and urban sources is critical to improving water quality. DCR will engage unprecedented numbers of partners in order to make significant progress toward Chesapeake Bay 2010 goals and improving impaired waters. DCR will place an emphasis on getting better results with cost-effective strategies and focusing on priority practices. Voluntary measures and incentives that have broad appeal to participants and partners must be expanded, developed, and delivered. Regulatory programs will continue to be a component of these efforts. Increasing compliance with DCR's existing regulatory programs and permits will be a primary focus for the Agency. Increasing service delivery capabilities within DCR and the 47 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts will be essential for meeting Virginia's water quality goals.
- DCR is working with outside experts and partners to conduct market research on how to increase the use of agricultural best management practices as part of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy implementation. Development of an outreach plan is the next step.
- Recent expansion of the Department's responsibilities relating to the administration of the federal - state stormwater management program will require DCR to work effectively with local governments, Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the Environmental Protection Agency on the development of criteria for local program adoption.
- In order to meet the growing demands for Virginia State Parks, the Department will seek to complete the operational rebenchmarking of state parks begun in the 2005 legislative session, will complete planned facilities and acquire parkland under the 2002 General Obligation Bond proceeds, and will require support to open potentially six new state parks in the near future.
- DCR must increase protection of key resource lands in order to acquire sufficient park and recreation lands and natural area preserves to meet the public's current and future needs. Additionally, DCR will employ a range of land conservation options and initiatives (including conservation easements) and engage public and private partners in future efforts.
- DCR will work with the Natural Resources Secretariat, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, and the conservation community to track results, target preservation efforts, disperse VLCF grant funds, and expend acquisition funds to achieve Governor Kaine's 400,000-acre land preservation goal by 2010.
- Increased legislative responsibility will require DCR to provide significantly increased technical assistance and regulatory oversight of the safety of private and public dams. The Department will work with the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and interested stakeholders to review existing regulations, assess alternative approaches, seek increased enforcement and staffing capabilities, and examine dam repair funding strategies.
- Increased demand for statewide outdoor recreation opportunities will require DCR to provide expanded fiscal and technical support for trail development and outdoor recreation planning. As part of its role, DCR will complete the 2007 VOP to identify related needs and opportunities, work with communities on rail-to-trail initiatives, and will complete the development of the James River and the York River segments of the Captain John Smith Trail by 2007.
- The increasing size of the Natural Area Preserve System will increase demand on existing staff for biological resource management as well as law enforcement and operational issues. Management complexity will

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

increase, including more required oversight of easements and Natural Area Preserve System boundaries, the need for increased public access, and the understanding of natural heritage protection activities. As part of its role, DCR will continue to provide and improve the use of land conservation mapping tools and serve as a key participant in the statewide Invasive Species Council.

- Having streamlined the structure of the agency's boards and commissions during the past four years, the Department will continue to improve the effectiveness of its remaining policy and advisory boards and increase their active involvement in furthering state goals and initiatives.
- DCR will continue to improve its agency-wide technological capabilities for gathering and disseminating information as an effort to enhance customer service.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Impediments

Impediments to DCR fully implementing expanding programs and properly addressing the citizen demands upon it include the following:

- Significant limitations on staffing and funding have impeded agency operations and programs in state parks, natural heritage, dam safety, park design and construction, and soil and water conservation.
- Lack of a permanent, sufficient, and stable source of funding has made it difficult for DCR to transition its nonpoint source water quality improvement programs from demonstration projects to a fully functional implementation program with the service delivery mechanisms in place. This will be necessary for the state to achieve its 2010 Chesapeake Bay goals, TMDL implementation, and other water quality commitments and mandates.
- Limited understanding of program requirements by the public and insufficient funding assistance to dam owners for dam repairs are impeding the advancement of the dam safety programs.
- Rising costs associated with real property and park facility construction have reduced the scope of park projects and limited agency land acquisitions. Virginia's real property processes and procedures have also slowed efforts to acquire conservation lands and protective easements, reduced the selling public's confidence, and added to construction costs.
- Local governments and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts have limited staff, expertise, and financial capabilities to carry out recent initiatives such as Tributary Strategies, TMDL implementation, stormwater management requirements, and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.
- The breadth and complexity of the agency makes communication with DCR's many customers a challenge. This also leads to challenges associated with the Department's public identity.
- With its growing responsibilities and regulatory programs (stormwater, erosion and sediment control, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, and dam safety) and increasing land transactions associated with bond purchases and easements, DCR needs strong support and counsel from the Attorney General's Office to address regulatory legal issues and timely real estate actions. Recognizing the needs, DCR has contracted with the Attorney General's Office for additional support to meet agency workloads.
- Within the next 5 years, 48 of the agency's workforce will become eligible for retirement, many of whom are employed in a management or senior level position.
- Location of the Department's Richmond-based staff in three buildings makes frequent agency staff interactions and coordination difficult. Though staffing is still considered inadequate, DCR has been fortunate to gain additional MEL over the years to manage its ever-increasing program requirements. DCR's MEL has increased from 340 in July 1998 to 498 in July 2005; an increase of 158 positions. Many of these positions are for field locations but many are also for central Richmond offices. DCR's office capacity is at a maximum. We desperately need the employees but the situation with inadequate office space is becoming critical and will eventually have a detrimental effect on the efficiency and productivity of the agency. The ideal situation is for all of DCR staff to be located in the same building with adequate space for all employees, plus room for expansion.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Agency Background Information

Statutory Authority

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

The Department of Conservation and Recreation operates under the supervision of the Secretary of Natural Resources and is empowered to perform its duties, execute its powers, or prescribe rules and regulations as conferred by law. The overarching authority may be found in Section 1 of Article XI of the Virginia Constitution that reads:

"To the end that the people have clean air, pure water, and the use and enjoyment for recreation of adequate public lands, waters, and other natural resources, it shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to conserve, develop, and utilize its natural resources, its public lands, and its historical sites and buildings. Further, it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect its atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth."

Additional Code authorities include:

- The Department is charged with the responsibility for the Commonwealth's nonpoint source pollution management program including administration of certain state and federal laws including §319 of the federal Clean Water Act (33 USC §1251 et seq.) and §6217 of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act (16 USC §1451 et seq.). The department is also responsible for operation of a voluntary nutrient management training and certification program and for the promulgation of program regulations, including the criteria for the development of nutrient management plans for various agricultural and urban agronomic practices. The Department is required to develop written procedures for the development, submission, and the implementation of a nutrient management plan or planning standards and specifications that shall be provided to all state agencies, state colleges and universities, and other state governmental entities that own land upon which nutrients are applied. The Department is also authorized to provide technical assistance and training for state entities on the development and implementation of a nutrient management plan and to conduct periodic reviews. The department is authorized to recognize farms that utilize practices designed to protect water quality and soil resources by administering the Clean Water Farm Award Program. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 1.

- The director may convey, lease, or demise departmental lands, lease state-owned housing under the control of the department to state employees, grant easements to governmental agencies and public service corporations for renewable periods of not more than 10 years, sell trees, and authorize the removal of minerals from such lands under conditions prescribed by law. With the approval of the Governor, the director is authorized to enter into leases and contracts with an initial term of up to 30 years for the operation and development of revenue-producing capital improvement projects in Virginia state parks. The director of the department is responsible for managing historic sites and commemorative facilities. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 3.

- The director may request the Governor to commission individuals designated by the director to act as conservation officers of the Commonwealth. Commissioned conservation officers shall be law-enforcement officers and shall have power to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth and the regulations of the Department and the collegial bodies under administrative support of the Department. If requested by the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality, conservation officers shall coordinate the investigation of felonies with the local law-enforcement agency. The Department's Conservation officers shall also have the power to arrest without warrant in certain cases as authorized pursuant to § 19.2-81. Conservation officers shall have jurisdiction throughout the Commonwealth on all Department lands and waters and upon lands and waters under the management or control of the Department; on property of the United States government or a department or agency thereof on which the Commonwealth has concurrent jurisdiction and is contiguous with land of the Department or on which the Department has a management interest; on a property of another state agency or department whose property is contiguous with land of the Department; and in those local jurisdictions in which

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

mutual aid agreements have been established pursuant to § 15.2-1736. Special conservation officers appointed pursuant to § 10.1-115 shall have jurisdiction throughout the Commonwealth. Upon separation from the Department, incapacity, death, or other good cause, the Director may recommend in writing the decommissioning of any conservation officer to the Governor. The Director may designate certain conservation officers to be special conservation officers. Special conservation officers shall have the same authority and power as sheriffs throughout the Commonwealth to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 4.

- The department is responsible for acquiring, developing, improving, managing, licensing, and regulating the use of state parks and for undertaking a master planning process for all existing state parks, following the substantial acquisition of land for a new state park, and prior to undertaking substantial improvements to state parks. The department is authorized to acquire properties or interests therein of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historical interest, biological significance or any other unusual features that should be acquired, preserved and maintained for the use, observation, education, health and pleasure of the people of Virginia. Further, the department is authorized to permit and otherwise regulate activities on those portions of the Appalachian Trail under its control. The department is instructed to establish a Golden Passport card that authorizes persons receiving social security disability payments to enter Virginia's state parks without having to pay an admittance or parking fee. The department also is charged to establish, maintain, protect and regulate a statewide system of trails. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 2, Article 1.

- The department is authorized to establish and maintain a comprehensive plan for the development of public outdoor recreational facilities; to establish standards for such facilities; to disburse funds to local, regional, and other state agencies for acquiring and developing such facilities; and to make regulations to carry out the statute. It may develop recreational programs and assist state institutions, agencies, and political subdivisions in developing such programs. The department is authorized to acquire property or interests therein to maintain the character of the land as open-space land. Such land is to be made available for agricultural and timbering uses that are compatible in maintaining the open-space nature of the property. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 2, Article 2.

- The department is authorized to establish criteria for the selection, registration and dedication of natural areas and natural area preserves; grant permits to qualified persons for the conduct of scientific research and investigations within natural area preserves; provide recommendations to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and to the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries concerning their regulatory activities related to endangered species; produce an inventory of the Commonwealth's natural heritage resources; maintain a natural heritage data bank; develop a natural heritage plan to establish priorities for the protection, acquisition and management of registered and dedicated natural areas and natural area preserves; and maintain a state registry of voluntarily protected natural areas to be called the Virginia Registry of Natural Areas. General fund appropriations, gifts, bequests, devises, fees, lease proceeds, and funds accruing from, or attributable to, the use or management of state natural area preserves acquired or held by the Department are to be deposited to the Natural Area Preservation Fund. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 2, Article 3.

- The director is authorized, subject to the provisions of the chapter, to issue revenue bonds of the Commonwealth to pay the cost of acquiring, constructing, enlarging, improving, and maintaining camping and recreational facilities in any of the state parks and to establish and collect fees and charges for the use of such facilities. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 3.

- The department is directed to cooperate with the Commonwealth Transportation Board in the designation of scenic highways and byways. Code of Virginia, Title 33.1, Chapter 1, Article 5.

- The director has the responsibility to designate a public recreational area as such and recommend to the Commonwealth Transportation Board that an access road or bikeway be provided to the area. Code of Virginia, Title 33.1, Chapter 1, Article 15.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- The department has the duty of studying rivers or sections of rivers, reporting upon and recommending to the Governor and the General Assembly those to be considered for designation as scenic rivers. The director shall serve as the executive secretary of the Virginia Scenic River Board and may appoint Scenic River Advisory Committees or other local or regional committees to consider and manage scenic river interests and issues. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapters 4 and 4.1.
- The department administers education and training certification programs related to the state's erosion and sediment control program. The department approves conservation plans and specifications for all state agencies' projects involving land-disturbing activities. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 5, Article 4.
- The department is required to establish guidelines which will meet the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 USC §4001 et seq.). Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 1.
- The director upon approval from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, may make grants or loans from the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund to local governments for the purpose of providing matching funds for flood prevention or protection. The director, upon approval from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, may also make grants and loans to local governments owning dams and to make loans to private entities for the design, repair and the safety modifications of dams identified in safety reports and to make grants to localities for the mapping and digitization of dam break inundation zones. Funding to assist localities in the development of these maps, is contingent upon the localities contributing a local match. The highest priority for awarding funds shall be placed on assisting with the mapping of the highest class of dams. The director shall, after consultation with all interested parties, develop a guidance document governing project eligibility and project priority criteria. The Virginia Resources Authority shall administer and manage the Fund, and establish the interest rates and the repayment terms of such loans as provided in this article, in accordance with a memorandum of agreement with the director. During the maintenance, construction, or alteration of any dam or reservoir, the Department shall make periodic inspections for the purpose of securing conformity with the approved plans and specifications. The Department shall require the owner to perform at his expense such work or tests as necessary to obtain information sufficient to enable the Department to determine whether conformity with the approved plans and specifications is being secured. If, after any inspections, investigations, or examinations, or at any time as the work progresses, or at any time prior to issuance of a certificate of approval, it is found by the Director that project modifications or changes are necessary to ensure conformity with the approved plans and specifications, the Director may issue an administrative order to the owner to comply with the plans and specifications. The Director may issue a temporary stop work order on a construction or alteration project if he finds that an owner is constructing or altering a dam without having first obtained the necessary certificate of approval, or if the activities are not in accordance with approved plans and specifications. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 1.2.
- The department is responsible for coordinating a comprehensive flood control program for the Commonwealth. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 6.
- Pursuant to the Virginia Stormwater Management Act, and based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's authorization for delegation of program authority to the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, effective January 29, 2005, the department may carryout those powers and duties delegated to it by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board except the adoption and promulgation of regulations. The Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board shall administer the issuance of national pollutant discharge elimination system permits for the control of stormwater discharges from MS4 and construction activities from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the federal Clean Water Act. Powers further delegated to the department from the board may include the authority to issue, deny, revoke, terminate, amend and enforce stormwater permits for the control of stormwater discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems and land disturbing activities; approve and periodically review local stormwater

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

management programs and management programs developed in conjunction with a municipal separate storm sewer permit; enforce the provisions of the Act; and otherwise act to ensure the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth as well as protect the quality and quantity of state waters from the potential harm of unmanaged stormwater. The department shall provide an annual schedule by which localities can submit applications for delegation. In the absence of the delegation of a stormwater management program to a locality, the department will administer the responsibilities of the Act within the given jurisdiction. The department shall develop a model ordinance for establishing a local stormwater management program consistent with the Act. For state agency projects, the department shall perform random site inspections to assure compliance with the Act, the Erosion and Sediment Control Law, and regulations promulgated thereunder. The department shall have thirty days in which to comment on another state agency's stormwater management plans. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 1.1.

- The department may issue a permit to excavate or remove any archaeological, paleontological, prehistoric or historic feature of any cave, or to carry out other scientific investigations or collections. The department, through the Virginia Cave Board, is responsible for protecting rare, unique, and irreplaceable minerals and archaeological resources found in caves; rare and endangered animal or other life forms found in caves; ground water flow in caves; and the integrity of caves that have unique characteristics or are exemplary natural community types. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 10.

- The director shall serve as executive secretary to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and shall be responsible for providing technical assistance and performing any administrative duties that the Foundation may direct. As such the director is responsible for developing for the Chairman of the Board an executive summary and report of the interim activity and work of the Board on or before December 15 of each even-numbered year. The document shall report on the status of the Foundation and its Fund including, but not limited to, implementation of its strategic plan; land conservation targeting tools developed for the Foundation; descriptions of projects that received funding; a description of the geographic distribution of land protected; expenditures from, interest earned by, and financial obligations of the Fund; and progress made toward recognized state and regional land conservation goals. Additionally, the Department shall administer the Foundation's lands as if such lands were departmental lands, and the regulations established by the Director for the management and protection of departmental lands shall apply to real estate held by the Foundation. The Department's conservation officers commissioned under § 10.1-115 shall have jurisdiction on all of the Foundation's lands and waters. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 10.2.

- On July 1, 2004, in accordance with Items 379 and 382J of Chapter 4 (Appropriations Act) of the 2004 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session I, that directed the merger of the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department into DCR effective July 1, 2004, the Governor issued a memo to the director of DCR vesting him with the powers of the former executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department. The director shall carry out management and supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the regulations and policies of the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board. The director shall be vested with all the authority of the board, including the authority of the board to institute or intervene in legal and administrative actions to ensure compliance by local governing bodies with this chapter, and with any criteria or regulations adopted hereunder, when it is not in session, subject to such regulations as may be prescribed by the board. In no event shall the director have the authority to promulgate any final regulations. Chapter 41 of the 2005 Virginia Acts of Assembly (SB1103) amended the Act effective July 1, 2005 to finalize the merger and to bring the administration of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act under the auspices of DCR. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 21.

- The Department, in conjunction with other state agencies, shall evaluate and report on the impacts of nonpoint source pollution on water quality and water quality improvement to the Governor and the General Assembly. The Department in cooperation with localities may develop a cooperative program to address identified nonpoint source pollution impairment or degradation, including excess nutrients. The Department of Conservation and Recreation shall be the lead state agency for determining the appropriateness of any grant related to nonpoint source pollution to be made from the Water Quality Improvement Fund to restore, protect and improve the

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

quality of state waters. The Director shall give priority consideration to the distribution of grants from the Fund for the purposes of implementing tributary strategy plans, with a priority given to agricultural practices. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 21.1.

- The Director shall provide assistance to the Foundation for Virginia's Natural Resources in developing grant criteria and in providing advice on grant priorities and other appropriate issues. The Foundation for Virginia's Natural Resources is created primarily to assist in developing and to encouraging the nonregulatory conservation programs within the agencies of the Secretariats of Natural Resources and Agriculture and Forestry; and to foster collaboration and partnerships among businesses, communities, and the Commonwealth's environmental enhancement programs. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 21.2.

- The governing bodies of localities, and state-supported institutions of higher learning having a police force, as well as sheriffs with law-enforcement authority within localities without a police force, and the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation with commissioned conservation officers, or any combination thereof may, by proper resolutions, enter in and become a party to contracts or mutual aid agreements for the use of their joint police or other law-enforcement forces, both regular and auxiliary, their equipment and materials to maintain peace and good order. Any police or other law-enforcement officer, regular or auxiliary, while performing his duty under any such contract or agreement, shall have the same authority in such locality as he has within the locality where he was appointed. In counties where no police department has been established, the sheriff may, in his discretion, enter into mutual aid agreements as provided by this section. Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 17. Article 3, § 15.2-1736

- The department shall assist the Board of Health in the adoption of regulations related to the land application of sewage sludge. The regulations shall include the requirements for site-specific nutrient management plans, developed by persons certified in accordance with the department, prior to land application for all sites where sewage sludge is land applied. The department must approve certain nutrient management plans prior to permit issuance. Code of Virginia, Title 32.1, Chapter 6, Article 1.

- The director of the department is responsible for prescribing uniform standards relating to real estate devoted to open-space use under Special Assessment for Land Preservation commonly known as the Land Use Assessment Law. Code of Virginia, Title 58.1, Chapter 32, Article 4.

- The department is responsible for approving the nutrient management plans for confined animal feeding operations and with the Department of Environmental Quality may include in the confined animal feeding permit or nutrient management plan more frequent or additional monitoring of waste, soils or ground water as required to protect state waters. The department, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, is required to develop or approve a training program for persons operating confined animal feeding operations covered by the General Permit. Additionally, by December 31, 2005, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Quality, shall complete an examination of current developments in scientific research and technology that shall include a review of land application of poultry waste, soil nutrient retention capacity, and water quality degradation and adopt and implement regulatory or other changes, if any, to its nutrient management plan program that it concludes are appropriate as a result of this examination. Upon the effective date of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's revised regulatory criteria and standards governing phosphorous application rates, or on October 31, 2005, whichever is later, phosphorous application rates for all nutrient management plans developed pursuant to this section shall conform solely to such regulatory criteria and standards adopted by the Department of Conservation and Recreation to protect water quality or to reduce soil concentrations of phosphorous or phosphorous loadings. The application of poultry waste shall be managed to minimize runoff and leaching and reduce adverse water quality impacts from phosphorous. Code of Virginia, Title 62.1, Chapter 3.1, Article 3.

- The director may request the Governor to commission individuals designated by the director to act as

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

conservation officers of the Commonwealth. Commissioned conservation officers shall be law-enforcement officers and shall have power to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth and the regulations of the Department and the collegial bodies under administrative support of the Department. If requested by the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality, conservation officers shall coordinate the investigation of felonies with the local law-enforcement agency. The Department's Conservation officers shall also have the power to arrest without warrant in certain cases as authorized pursuant to § 19.2-81.

- Conservation officers shall have jurisdiction throughout the Commonwealth on all Department lands and waters and upon lands and waters under the management or control of the Department; on property of the United States government or a department or agency thereof on which the Commonwealth has concurrent jurisdiction and is contiguous with land of the Department or on which the Department has a management interest; on a property of another state agency or department whose property is contiguous with land of the Department; and in those local jurisdictions in which mutual aid agreements have been established pursuant to § 15.2-1736.

- Special conservation officers appointed pursuant to § 10.1-115 shall have jurisdiction throughout the Commonwealth. Upon separation from the Department, incapacity, death, or other good cause, the Director may recommend in writing the decommissioning of any conservation officer to the Governor. The Director may designate certain conservation officers to be special conservation officers. Special conservation officers shall have the same authority and power as sheriffs throughout the Commonwealth to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 4.

- The governing bodies of localities, and state-supported institutions of higher learning having a police force, as well as sheriffs with law-enforcement authority within localities without a police force, and the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation with commissioned conservation officers, or any combination thereof may, by proper resolutions, enter in and become a party to contracts or mutual aid agreements for the use of their joint police or other law-enforcement forces, both regular and auxiliary, their equipment and materials to maintain peace and good order. Any police or other law-enforcement officer, regular or auxiliary, while performing his duty under any such contract or agreement, shall have the same authority in such locality as he has within the locality where he was appointed. In counties where no police department has been established, the sheriff may, in his discretion, enter into mutual aid agreements as provided by this section. Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 17, Article 3, § 15.2-1736.

- The Secretary of Natural Resources shall develop a plan for the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia's waters designated as impaired by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The plan shall be revised and amended as needed to reflect changes in strategies, timetables, and milestones. Upon the request of the Secretary of Natural Resources, state agencies shall participate in the development of the plan. Code of Virginia, Title 62.1, Chapter 3.7.

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

- The Board of Conservation and Recreation provides recommendations to the director on grants and loans pertaining to outdoor recreation, on the designation of recreational sites eligible for recreational access road funds, on master plans and substantial acquisition or improvement amendments to master plans, and on designations for scenic rivers, scenic highways, and Virginia Byways. The Board is authorized to conduct fund-raising activities as deemed appropriate and will deposit such revenue into the State Parks Projects Fund. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 2.

- The Board may provide advice to the director on expenditures from the State Park Projects Fund. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 2, Article 1.

- The Board is authorized to allocate grants of state funds to local governments for conserving, protecting, improving, maintaining, and developing public beaches on tidal shorelines and to oversee local implementation

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

of approved projects. The board may establish guidelines governing the application procedures, allocations or implementation standards in accordance with the criteria set forth in the Public Beach Conservation and Development Act. The director provides department staff necessary for the execution of the functions of the board. The Board shall have the authority to promulgate regulations necessary for the execution of Public Beach Conservation and Development Act. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 7, Article 2.

- The Board is authorized to encourage and promote nonpoint source pollution control and prevention, and to provide technical assistance on aspects of water quality restoration, protection, and improvement. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 22.1, Article 3.

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

- The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board is authorized to approve the creation, boundary modification, and discontinuance of soil and water conservation districts; to approve applications for federal aid for soil and water conservation programs; and to make loans from state funds to local authorities for such programs; and the board may give or lend financial aid and other assistance to soil and water conservation districts. The board is authorized to promulgate regulations to carry out these functions. The director provides department staff necessary for the execution of the functions of the board. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 5, Articles 2 and 3.

- Under the Agricultural Stewardship Act, the board shall review appeals by persons aggrieved by decisions of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services regarding agricultural water pollution complaints. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 5, Article 3.1.

- The board is authorized to promulgate regulations for the effective control of soil erosion, sediment deposition and nonagricultural runoff which must be met in local soil erosion and sediment control programs to prevent the unreasonable degradation of properties, stream channels, waters and other natural resources. The board approves programs adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts or by local governing bodies; adopts programs for localities failing to submit proposals; determines appeals from districts' decisions respecting proposed land-disturbing activities; and approves such activities with respect to lands under jurisdiction of more than one local control program. The board is instructed to periodically conduct comprehensive reviews of local erosion and sediment control programs to ensure that they meet minimum standards of effectiveness in controlling soil erosion, sediment deposition, and nonagricultural runoff. The board is required to issue certificates of competence concerning the content, application and intent of specified subject areas of the Erosion and Sediment Control Law and accompanying regulations to personnel of local governments and to responsible land disturbers who have completed training courses or in other ways demonstrated adequate knowledge of such laws and regulations. To address water quality violations, the board may issue stop work orders according to the process outlined in the article. The board may also issue a special order, after conducting a formal hearing pursuant to the Administrative Process Act, to a locality that has not taken action to correct the manner in which it is administering its erosion and sediment control program. Those localities which have not initiated or implemented an approved corrective action agreement are subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$5,000 per day with the maximum amount not to exceed \$20,000 per violation. Additionally, each locality is required to report to the Department, in a method and on a time schedule established by the Department, a listing of each land-disturbing activity in the locality for which an Erosion and Sediment Control plan has been approved. Any person engaging in the creation and operation of wetland mitigation banks in multiple jurisdictions, which have been approved and are operated in accordance with applicable federal and state guidance, laws, or regulations for the establishment, use, and operation of mitigation banks, pursuant to a permit issued by the Department of Environmental Quality, the Marine Resources Commission, or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, may, at the option of that person, file general erosion and sediment control specifications for wetland mitigation banks annually with the Board for review and approval consistent with guidelines established by the Board. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 5, Article 4.

- The board may approve plans for capture and storage of floodwaters by riparian landowners, inspect impoundment structures, and make regulations for proper and safe construction of impoundment structures. The

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Board shall promulgate regulations to ensure that impounding structures in the Commonwealth are properly and safely constructed, maintained and operated. The Board may delegate to the Director or his designee any of the powers and duties vested in the Board by the Dam Safety Act, except the adoption and promulgation of regulations or the issuance of dam safety certificates. Delegation shall not remove from the Board authority to enforce the provisions of the Dam Safety Act. The Board and its agents and employees are authorized to enter any property at reasonable times and under reasonable circumstances to perform such inspections and tests or to take such other actions it deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities, including the inspection of dams, provided that the Board or its agents or employees make a reasonable effort to obtain the consent of the owner of the land prior to entry. If entry is denied, the Board or its designated agents or employees are authorized to apply to any magistrate whose territorial jurisdiction encompasses the property to be inspected or entered for a warrant authorizing such investigation, tests or other actions. Such warrant shall issue if the magistrate finds probable cause to believe that there is a dam on such property which is not known to be safe. The Director, upon approval from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, shall direct the distribution of loans from the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund to local governments and private entities and the distribution of grants to local governments. Upon petition for a hearing on a director's administrative order by a dam owner, the Board has the authority to affirm, modify, amend, or cancel the director's administrative orders. The Board may bring suit in the name of the Commonwealth in any court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin the unlawful construction, modification, operation, or maintenance of any dam regulated under the Virginia Dam Safety Act. When setting civil penalty amounts, the Board shall consider (i) the nature, duration, and number of previous instances of failure by the owner to comply with requirements of law relating to dam safety and the requirements of Board regulations and orders; (ii) the efforts of the owner to correct deficiencies or other instances of failure to comply with the requirements of law relating to dam safety and the requirements of Board regulations and orders that are the subject of the proposed penalty; (iii) the cost of carrying out actions required to meet the requirements of law and Board regulations and orders; (iv) the hazard classification of the dam; and (v) other factors deemed appropriate by the Board. The Board is authorized to establish and collect application fees from any dam safety certificate applicant to be deposited into the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund for the administration of the dam safety program, administrative review, certifications, and the repair and maintenance of dams. The board is authorized to promulgate regulations for the proper administration of the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 2.

- The board is authorized to establish regulations for the proper administration of the Conservation, Small Watersheds Flood Control and Area Development Fund. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 4.
- The board is authorized to prescribe regulations for the conduct of referenda regarding watershed improvement districts. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 3.
- The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the department have issued guidelines for realignment of district boundaries and instructions, policy statements, and forms for administration of the loan and grant programs.
- The board is authorized to permit, regulate, and control stormwater runoff in the Commonwealth. In accordance with the Virginia Stormwater Management Act, the board may issue, deny, revoke, terminate, amend and enforce stormwater permits for the control of stormwater discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems and land disturbing activities; adopt regulations; approve and periodically review local stormwater management programs and management programs developed in conjunction with a municipal separate storm sewer permit; enforce the provisions of the Act; and otherwise act to ensure the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth as well as protect the quality and quantity of state waters from the potential harm of unmanaged stormwater. The board may also delegate to the department or to an approved locality any of the powers and duties vested in it by the Act except the adoption and promulgation of regulations. Delegation shall not remove from the board authority to enforce the provisions of this article. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 6, Article 1.1.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

CHESAPEAKE BAY LOCAL ASSISTANCE BOARD

- Chapter 608 of the 1988 Acts of Assembly enacted the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 21. The Act creates the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board, responsible to the Governor, to carry out the purposes and provisions of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. The Board is required to promulgate regulations that establish criteria for use by local governments to determine the ecological and geographic extent of Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas. The Board must also promulgate regulations that establish criteria for use by local governments in granting, denying, or modifying requests to rezone, subdivide, or to use and develop land in these areas. Local governments are required to use the criteria promulgated by the Board to ensure that the use and development of land in Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas is accomplished in a manner that protects the quality of state waters. The oversight for this Board was transferred to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, effective on July 1, 2004, pursuant to Items 379 and 382J of Chapter 4 (Appropriations Act) of the 2004 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session I and finalized pursuant to Code changes during the 2005 Session. Chapter 41 of the 2005 Virginia Acts of Assembly (SB1103) amended the Act effective July 1, 2005 to finalize the merger and to bring the administration of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act under the auspices of DCR.

In addition to Code authorities, the Department and its Boards have the following regulations:

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (4 VAC 5)

§ 4 VAC 5-10. Regulatory Public Participation Procedures, eff. Dec. 30, 1992; amended June 29, 1994 and Sept. 10, 2003.

§ 4 VAC 5-15. Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations, eff. Jan 24, 1996; amended January 11, 2006.

§ 4 VAC 5-20. Standards for Classification of Real Estate as Devoted to Open Space Use Under the Virginia Land Use assessment Law, eff. Apr. 28, 1976; amended Jan. 5, 1989.

§ 4 VAC 5-30. Virginia State Parks Regulations, 1975, eff. Jan. 15, 1976; amended May 1, 1977, Jan. 18, 1981, June 24, 1982, May 4, 1983, and Feb. 12, 2003.

§ 4 VAC 5-36. Standard fees for Use of Department of Conservation and Recreation Facilities, Programs and Services, eff. Apr. 25, 2002; amended Mar. 27, 2003, May 21, 2003, April 7, 2004, and February 8, 2006.

§ 4 VAC 5-40. Virginia State Forest Regulations, adopted Oct. 14, 1970.

- [Note: Chapter 324 of the 2005 Virginia Acts of Assembly authorized the transfer of the Virginia State Forest Regulations from the Department of Conservation and Recreation to the Department of Forestry, effective July 1, 2005, and stated that the regulations shall remain in full force and effect until amended, modified, or repealed. The Department of Forestry was authorized to update and renumber the regulations thru and exempt action.

§ 4 VAC 5-50. Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund Regulations, eff. May 9, 1990; amended May 15, 1996.

- [Note: Chapters 648 and 765 of the 2006 Virginia Acts of Assembly instruct the Department of Conservation and Recreation to repeal through an exempt action the Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund Regulations (4 VAC 5-50-10 et seq.).]

§ 4 VAC 5-60. Reforestation of Timberlands Regulations, adopted Oct. 15, 1971; amended Dec. 6, 1979; Apr. 24, 1980; July 22, 1981; July 1, 1982; May 4, 1983; and July 1, 1983.

- [Note: Chapter 324 of the 2005 Virginia Acts of Assembly authorized the transfer of the Reforestation of Timberlands Regulations from the Department of Conservation and Recreation to the Department of Forestry, effective July 1, 2005, and stated that the regulations shall remain in full force and effect until amended, modified, or repealed. The Department of Forestry was authorized to update and renumber the regulations thru and exempt action.

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (4 VAC 3)

4 VAC 3-10. Regulatory Public Participation Procedures, eff. Dec. 30, 1992; amended July 13, 1994 and September

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

10, 2003.

BOARD ON CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC BEACHES (4 VAC 50)

§ 4 VAC 45-10. Regulations Governing Application for and use of Grant Funds to Localities, eff. April 12, 1981; rev. July 21, 1982. [Note: Authority for the promulgation of and amendments to these regulations was transferred to the Board of Conservation and Recreation pursuant to Chapters 79 and 89 of the 2003 Virginia Acts of Assembly. This action also eliminated the Board on Conservation and Development of Public Beaches.]

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD (4 VAC 50)

§ 4 VAC 50-10. Regulatory Public Participation Procedures, eff. Dec. 30, 1992; amended July 13, 1994 and Sept. 10, 2003.

§ 4 VAC 50-20. Impounding Structure Regulations, eff. Feb. 1, 1989; amended July 1, 2002.

§ 4 VAC 50-30. Erosion and Sediment Control Regulations, eff. Sept. 13, 1990; amended Mar. 22, 1995.

§ 4 VAC 50-50. Erosion and Sediment Control Certification Regulations, eff. Mar. 22, 1995.

§ 4 VAC 50-60. Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) Permit Regulations, eff. Jan. 1, 2005 or 30 days after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's authorization for delegation of program authority is received, whichever is the latter, see 21:3, p. 317 and [Received approval December 30, 2004] eff. Jan. 29, 2005, 21:10, p. 1231.

CHESAPEAKE BAY LOCAL ASSISTANCE BOARD (9 VAC 10)

§ 9 VAC 10-10. Public Participation Guidelines, eff. Jan 1, 1993; amended May 20, 1994, Jan. 29, 2003 and December 14, 2005.

§ 9 VAC 10-20. Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Designation and Management Regulations, eff. Oct. 1, 1991; amended Mar. 1, 2002.

OTHER CODE AUTHORITIES UNDER WHICH DCR OPERATES INCLUDE:

Virginia Laws:

- Virginia Public Procurement Act; Code of Virginia, Title 2.2, Chapter 43, § § 2.2-4300 et seq.
- Chapters of the Virginia Acts of Assembly that direct the agency on specific real estate actions
- Commonwealth of Virginia Parks and Natural Area Bond Act of 2002; Chapters 854 [SB672] and 884 [HB1144] of the 2002 Virginia Acts of Assembly
- Capital Projects; Virginia Public Building Authority and Virginia College Building Authority; Chapters 855 [SB673] and 887 [HB1284] of the 2002 Virginia Acts of Assembly
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation; Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 18, § § 10.1-1800 et seq
- Open Space Land Act; Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 17, § § 10.1-1700 et seq.
- Virginia Conservation Easement Act; Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 10.1, § § 10.1-1009 et seq.
- Invasive Species Council; Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 26, § § 10.1-2600 et seq.
- Administrative Process Act; Code of Virginia, Title 2.2, Chapter 40, § § 2.2-4000 et seq.
- Virginia Register Act; Code of Virginia, Title 2.2, Chapter 41, § § 2.2-4100 et seq.
- Freedom of Information Act; Code of Virginia, Title 2.2, Chapter 37, § § 2.2-3700 et seq.
- Governor's Executive Orders
- Commonwealth of Virginia Construction and Professional Services Manual

Federal Laws:

- Virginia Recreational Trails Fund; Symms National Recreational Trails Act of 1991 (P.L. 102-240) replaced by the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in the Transportation Act for the 21st. Century (TEA-21) United States Code (23 U.S.M. 206); reauthorized in the Safe, Accountable, Transportation Efficiency Act (SAFETEA) and the newly authorized Safe, Accountable, Transportation Efficiency Act - Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005.
- National Flood Insurance Act of 1968; 42 USC §4001 et seq.
- Federal Clean Water Act Section 319; Title 33 (Navigation and Navigable Waters); Chapter 26 (Water Pollution Prevention and Control); Subchapter III (Standards and Enforcement); Section 1329 (Nonpoint source

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

management programs) of the United States Code (P.L. 100-4)

- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965; P.L. 88-578
- § 6217 of the Coastal Zone Management Act

Customer Base:

Customer Description	Served	Potential
Agricultural Community (number of farms)	15,000	47,000
Boards and Foundations (DCR's)	11	11
Businesses and Concessionaires	1,010	1,520
Conservation Organizations and Land Trusts	50	100
Educational Institutions/educators/students/researchers	5,000	10,000
Government Agencies (Federal, State, and Local)	450	450
Landowners	500	1,000
Media Outlets	626	626
Recreational Users (campers, picnickers, hikers, etc.)	7,000,000	10,500,000
Regulated Community	16,000	46,000
Soil and Water Conservation Districts	47	47
Special Customer Groups	400	700
Volunteers and Volunteer Groups	2,500	10,000

Anticipated Changes In Agency Customer Base:

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Agency Partners:

Boards and Foundations

Chesapeake Bay Program (Includes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia)

Contractual Services

Educational Institutions

Engineers and Consultants

Federal Agencies

General Assembly

Governor's Office and Cabinet

Local Governments

Non-profits

Other States

Regional Planning District Commissions

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Stakeholder Organizations

Tourism Organizations

Vendors

Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Agency Products and Services:

Current Products and Services

- Agency Policy, Planning and Budgeting
- Financial Assistance
- Outdoor Recreational Activities
- Regulatory Programs information
- Technical Assistance
- Public Education
- Public Information
- Permitting, Regulation, and Enforcement
- Public Safety (dam safety, law enforcement, etc.)
- Training and certification programs
- Construction Supervision and Oversight
- Park Facilities (cabins, campsites, picnic shelters, visitor centers, meeting facilities, training facilities, museums, etc.)
- Mapping for Dam Break Inundation Zones and Areas of Special Flood Hazards
- Conservation lands tracking and targeting tools
- Property conservation through funding fee simple and easement acquisitions
- Invasive species information and management
- Rare species and natural community inventory, information and management
- Park Programs (festivals, concerts, plays, performances, re-enactments, living histories, interpretive programs)
- Merchandise sales, gift shops, restaurants and food concessions
- Resource Management and protection
- Outdoor Recreation Resource Planning
- Cave and karst conservation services

Factors Impacting Agency Products and Services

- state funding levels
- insufficient staffing levels in key program areas
- declining federal funding levels
- expanding state and/or federal requirements
- increasing cost of construction materials, services, and land
- facility and equipment conditions
- increased demand for agency services/products
- difficulty attracting and retaining qualified staff

Anticipated Changes in Agency Products and Services

As Virginia's population increases, there will be an increased demand for services and facilities. However, there will also be additional stress placed upon the water, land, and fragile environments linked to those services and facilities.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Agency Financial Resources Summary:

For FY2006, DCR's funding comes from the General Fund, Federal Funds, State Park User Fees, Permits and Licensing Fees, and Contractual Work. Included in the General Fund Appropriation for FY2005 of \$69.9 million is nearly \$40 million in funds that are used for matching grants in support of state water and land initiatives and in pass-through funds to other entities. These include \$30.2 million for the Water Quality Improvement Fund, \$4.2 for financial assistance to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, \$2.5 million for Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, \$1.3 million for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, approximately \$1 million for various repairs to dams, \$685,473 for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, and \$225,000 for Breaks Interstate Park.

	Fiscal Year 2007		Fiscal Year 2008	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$46,719,516	\$25,699,979	\$46,089,179	\$25,299,979
Changes To Base	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
AGENCY TOTAL	\$46,719,516	\$25,699,979	\$46,089,179	\$25,299,979

Agency Human Resources Summary:

Human Resources Overview

- On July 1, 2004, the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) maximum employment level (MEL) increased to 424, which included the merger of the Department of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance into DCR.
- On November 1, 2004 another fifteen (15) positions transferred from the Department of Environmental Quality along with the Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP). The MEL increased to 439.
- The 2005 session of the General Assembly provided an additional fifty-nine (59) FTE as of July 1, 2005; fifty-seven (57) positions for beginning to address rebenchmarking of our State Parks, one NGF position for Karst Education in the Division of Natural Heritage, and one NGF position for the Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management. DCR's MEL as of July 1, 2005 is 498.
- The Governor's Introduced Budget under consideration by the 2006 General Assembly including funding for 21 additional positions in FY07 and FY08 for the Division of State Parks. However, final budget action has not been completed.
- Of the authorized 498 full-time classified positions, 203 of these positions are located in the Richmond area. The remaining 295 positions are located throughout the state.
- DCR staff are located throughout the Commonwealth and have management responsibilities at 34 state parks, 46 natural area preserves, and eight regional offices.
- DCR uses 45 roles codes. Two of the largest employee populations are in the Natural Resource Specialist II role (121 employees serving as maintenance park rangers, law enforcement park rangers, and chief rangers) and Environmental Specialist II role (99 employees serving as environmental scientists and specialists). Fifteen (15) positions are under the Northern Virginia Salary Structure, while the rest of the positions are in the Statewide Salary Structure.
- DCR has 116 law enforcement positions, which must attend an 18-week law-enforcement certification program, plus re-certification every two (2) years. Within the Division of State Parks, managerial/supervisory law enforcement personnel are required to live in staff housing on the park

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

premises, if available.

- Although the state parks are opened year-round, the primary season is from Memorial Day to Labor Day when park visitation surges. To accommodate the great influx of visitors, the Division of State Parks relies heavily on wage/seasonal staff to work the concessions, enterprise operations, lifeguards and serve as contact and maintenance rangers.

- For the 2006 park season, 1,071 wage positions were approved. During the non-peak season (October through April) 200 to 300 wage personnel are needed to provide routine maintenance, housekeeping, snow and ice removals, trail maintenance and repairs, etc. at the parks.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Position Summary

Effective Date: 3/31/2006

Total Authorized Position level 498

Vacant Positions 44

Non-Classified (Filled)..... 0

Full-Time Classified (Filled) 454

Part-Time Classified (Filled) 0

Faculty (Filled) 0

Wage 271

Contract Employees 2

Total Human Resource Level 727

Factors Impacting Human Resources

- Due to the high employment level of wage employees during the main park operating season, the total number of agency employees increases significantly during those months: April through September.

- Aging Work Force: Over the next five years, 48 of the current employees will become eligible for retirement; approximately 11% of the workforce. Currently, DCR has 138 employees who are age 50 or higher. In addition, there are another 136 employees who are eligible for reduced retirement benefits; age 50 or older with at least 10 years of service but not yet eligible for full retirement benefits.

- Turnover Rate: In FY05, DCR hired 45 new employees and lost 34 employees. The biggest reason cited for leaving the agency was for better jobs with higher salaries. The loss of law-enforcement staff impacts the agency heavily because of the cost of the law-enforcement training paid for by the agency. These employees are being lured into local law enforcement or local parks because of the higher salaries being offered. In some cases, a competitive salary offer from the agency would place an employee at equal or higher salary with a long-term employee or managerial staff. Recent retirements and subsequent loss of FTEs during the budget crisis has affected service area's ability to meet program requirements. Salary levels when suppressed, affect recruitment and retention. The challenge is balancing FTE levels to meet objectives while working within operational budgets. Another factor is that as federal grant funds decrease there is a corresponding loss of NGF staff positions. Office space, equipment storage, and lab facilities also need to be expanded to meet added staff and program requirements.

- Salary Compression: The average years of state service for agency employees is 11.9 years. Long-term employee salaries have not increased significantly beyond normal annual pay increases authorized by the General Assembly. In order to attract new employees, starting salaries are often comparable to salaries of longer-term employees, which if offered, creates problems with longer-term staff. If higher salaries are not offered, DCR often loses a good job applicant. Attracting and retaining skilled individuals is increasingly difficult due to a vibrant economy and the shortfalls of the state compensation structure.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- **Lack of Training:** Due to inadequate staff levels, new supervisor training and cross training has not always occurred when needed. Training is also impacted by not having targeted training funds in the budget or a more formal training program established within the agency. Lack of adequate training can impact employee and visitor safety, employee job satisfaction, and natural resource protection.
- **Demand for more administrative services:** As stated, DCR's MEL has increased from 400 to 498 since July 1, 2004 in an effort to begin to address the staffing shortfalls. Also, DCR went from 898 wage positions authorized in 2004 to 1,071 wage positions authorized in 2006. The program divisions are adding more services and programs. These program expansions require corresponding increases in administrative support. These increases have placed greater demands for procurement, financial management, public relations, human resources, payroll processing, and information technology services. There has been no corresponding increase in agency administrative FTE in several years.
- **New facilities, new parks, and new natural resources area preserves** have been opened and more are scheduled to open as a result of the 1992 and 2002 bond authorizations. Current staffing levels are inadequate to run these new facilities even with the 57 new positions authorized for FY06. The shortfall is made up with a combination of seasonal and year round wage employees. We also have a growing need for multilingual staff (Hispanic and Asian) and a demand for more interpretive, educational, resource management, and outdoor recreation program staff.
- **Lack of adequate full time employees to manage the rapidly growing Natural Area Preserve System** threatens the Commonwealth's investment and frustrates the general public that cannot access the properties.
- **With the consolidation of the Commonwealth's Storm Water Management programs within DCR's Division of Soil and Water Conservation,** additional staff to efficiently administer the federal components of the program may become necessary. Additional staff will be especially crucial if many localities opt not to administer the program.
- **With the amendment of the Dam Safety Act in 2001 bringing hundreds of additional dams under regulation,** the Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management now provides regulatory inspections and certifications to over 1,700 dams in the Commonwealth. To date, Virginia's engineers are responsible for 277 dams each, while staff in 10 East Coast States average 130 dams per employee. The Dam Safety Program is currently understaffed to properly administer the existing program requirements.

Anticipated Changes in Human Resources

- There is a potential for DCR to replace 11% of its workforce over the next five years due to retirements. This places an additional demand on scarce resources for severance costs, recruitment, training, and higher salary offers.
- DCR plans to conduct a salary review of present positions and role titles. Results could show that additional funding will be needed to bring employee salaries in-line with comparable roles.
- DCR will have to continue to rely on wage/hourly employees to meet the needs of increasing programs and services, until additional full-time classified positions are approved.
- DCR anticipates hiring more project engineers to handle increased workload generated by the 2002 GOB that includes an accelerated schedule for completion.
- DCR anticipates hiring more State Park and Natural Area Preserve management staff to manage the expanding land base and responsibilities from the 2002 Park and Natural Areas Bond.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- With the expansion of DCR's regulatory programs such as the Virginia Storm Water Management Program and the Dam Safety Program, DCR anticipates expanding the technical and administrative program staff to provide more guidance and direction to localities and the public.
- New and expanded strategies will be needed to improve the ability of the private sector and other levels of government to assist with the agency's program delivery.

Agency Information Technology Summary:

Current State / Issues

- DCR's network backbone has been upgraded to new 100-megabit switches with 1gigabit connections to the router in order to provide a more robust system in order to provide faster connection speeds. Connections between DCR's 3 campus buildings in the Richmond Capitol Complex will be 1gigabit fiber connections once the new equipment is in place. The connection to the DGS campus network will remain 100megabits until DGS upgrades their equipment.
- The merger of additional programs and staff into DCR over the last year is causing the current servers and backup system to approach capacity. A larger file server has been purchased and is awaiting installation. T
- DCR's ERP system (IDSS) is currently running on hardware and software that is no longer under maintenance contract, and needs to be upgraded. The hardware and software have been upgraded and maintained and installed on the network and is currently awaiting testing by the program area staff. Once testing is successful, the upgraded application will be moved over to full production.
- During the next biennium DCR will have approximately 250 PCs (desktop and laptop) and 2 servers that will be over 5 years old and eligible for refresh/disposal. This should be addressed in VITA's I.T. strategic plan for the agency.
- DCR conducts a large amount of geospatial analysis using GIS software. Web based geospatial map services support interstate and regional projects as well as supplementing DCR programs. There is a growing demand for GIS services internal and external to DCR. High public receptivity to GIS products and services establishes high expectations for continued service and support.
- 7 Soil & Water Conservation Watershed Offices each have their own server and GroupWise mail system linked to the central office via fractional T1 WAN links. Through these links, SWC Field Office staff can access their email in real time and access the Internet. 31 of our State Parks are able to connect to agency email, the reservations system and the agency ERP system using the Internet. Service and speeds vary with the type of connection available, which consists of dial-up (slowest connection speed), DSL, satellite, and cable (highest connection speed).

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Factor Impacting Information Technology

- The future financial impact of changes driven by VITA transformation and the transfer of statewide IT functions to Northrup-Grumman on July 1, 2006 is unknown and may result in an increase in personnel service costs beyond the costs of simply reimbursing VITA for the salaries of VITA personnel working at DCR.
- There is a strong demand for improved access for natural heritage and conservation data using new GIS and web technologies, and it is difficult to keep up with the demand and the technological advances to support it. Changes are occurring rapidly in geospatial software and data format standards. These rapid changes require increased levels of security caused by access to multiple operating systems and more open applications. The impact on DCR of the proposed Enterprise GIS Business Plan, being developed under the guidance of VGIN, is unknown at this time.
- The unavailability of affordable high-speed Internet access continues to impede our field sites from linking with the agency network for conducting daily business. Telephone lines in many rural localities, where many of our state parks are located, are inadequate for reliable Internet connectivity that is necessary for dial-up connections to the DCR network. In many of these same localities DSL and Internet cable are not available. This is an issue that needs enterprise-level attention by VITA.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Anticipated Changes / Desired State

- Procurement of a workgroup level DBMS for use in geospatial applications and online database availability. Creation of a single large intranet-like map service to support the Division of Soil and Water Conservation's geospatial needs across multiple programs/regional offices as well as the general public.
- There is widespread interest in the concept of creating a user-friendly interactive mapping source that would be available to researchers and the public alike for the purposes of obtaining map data of DCR resources.
- A newly formed intra-agency GIS Committee is working to encourage growth of GIS within DCR without a restructuring of DCR's existing centers of GIS strength. DCR is coordinating with and participating in VGIN efforts to improve central organization of GIS data development and distribution efforts.
- The development of an "enterprise" ERP system for agencies that goes beyond eVA.
- The most critical information technology needs for state parks is communication between central office and field locations; for field locations to be able to use the agency ERP system (IDSS), and other central-office applications necessary to handle the business end of park operations; and the need for continued access for the reservation center to our computerized reservation system. The remoteness and aging infrastructure of Virginia's rural telecommunications systems makes it difficult to achieve these desired results.
- The State Parks Reservation Center will be upgrading in the Fall of 2006 to a new version of software. The new software will be Oracle based and we will be able to contract with the software provider to house and maintain the data server. This will be an improvement for maintaining this out of scope VITA product as DCR has not had anyone with expertise with this older server or operating system in eight years.
- Issues identified in the Agency's IT Strategic Plan under Current State, Factors Impacting IT, and Anticipated Changes that relate to replacing/upgrading hardware and software, improving system/application availability, and improving telecommunications should be part of VITA's IT strategic plan in support of DCR operations.
- Based on the dollar criteria specified in the Commonwealth IT Strategic Planning Guidance and the fact that VITA should address infrastructure and procurements related to functions that transferred to VITA, DCR should have zero technology investments to report. However, to ensure there is no oversight between the Agency and VITA, DCR is including in this submission what it expects to spend on replacement PCs and associated software during the upcoming biennium.

Agency Information Technology Investments:

	<u>Cost-Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Cost-Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Major IT Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-Major IT Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Major IT Procurements	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-Major IT Procurements	\$240,000	\$0	\$240,000	\$0
Totals	\$240,000	\$0	\$240,000	\$0

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Agency Capital Investments Summary:

Current State / Issues

DCR owns a large portfolio of facilities and properties across the Commonwealth as part of its State Park System and its Natural Area Preserve System. This creates major capital, maintenance reserve, and preventive maintenance challenges. The current state of capital outlay in DCR is as follows:

STATE PARKS

- DCR currently operates 34 state parks. Each state park has an adopted master plan identifying facilities needed to bring the park to its desired level of development. There are over 300 major capital projects identified in these publicly developed plans.
- DCR now owns four new major park sites (Beaumont, Middle Peninsula, Seven Bends, and Widewater) with no developments and has four more under various stages of acquisition. All of these will require major investments in capital development funds in order to open them to the public. For all six parks, an investment of approximately \$48 million through FY10 is needed to complete phase 1 development. Public expectation is that these parks will be opened within the next several years.
- In DCR's current capital budget request, 68 major projects costing approximately \$130 million were identified as needing funding over the next three biennia. For the 06-08 biennium, 33 critical projects to meet public need were identified costing nearly \$66 millions. All of these projects are supplements to existing underfunded 2002 GOB projects to insure that all of the projects can be completed to their originally intended level of development.
- Without capital development funding, it will be impossible for Virginia's state parks to keep up with the ever increasing public demands and to provide the desired facilities to keep our parks ranked among the best in the Country.
- With over 1,200 buildings, DCR has one of the greatest building maintenance requirements in state government. Buildings vary in age from over 200 years to just completed and major maintenance requirements cover a wide variety of projects. Due to constantly deferred maintenance over the years caused by the lack of funds, many of our structures are in critical need of major repair/renovation. A 2005 APA report placed DCR's deferred maintenance in excess of \$197 million, the 2nd greatest need identified in the Commonwealth in that report.
- The public is becoming more aware of the condition of many of our facilities and their concerns are evident in their comments. To maintain the public trust, facility appearance will need to be brought back to our desired standard.
- DCR currently has nearly 100 projects on our approved Maintenance Reserve list. These projects cover everything from bathhouse and cabin repairs, to water, electric, and sewer upgrades; from road paving to new roofs. Without funding, projects are delayed and repairs become more costly. Visitor complaints increase and some visitation is lost due to poor facility appearance.
- DCR's current budget request for FY06-FY08 includes 48 major maintenance projects costing approximately \$6 million. This is from a list of nearly 100 delayed major projects with a cost estimate of about 15 million. Without funding, facilities will continue to deteriorate, public complaints will increase, and we will jeopardize our best in the Country ranking.

NATURAL AREA PRESERVES

- As of May 2006, DCR currently owns 34 natural area preserves (NAPs), covering a total of 24,792 acres.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

- DCR-owned natural area preserves and acreages are: Antioch Pines 884 (Isle of Wight County); Bethel Beach 105 (Matthews County); Big Spring Bog 50 (Grayson County); Buffalo Mountain 1,140 (Floyd County); Bush Mill Stream 103 (Northumberland County); Cedars 808 (Lee County); Cherry Orchard Bog 138 (Prince George and Sussex Counties); Chub Sandhill 433 (Sussex County); Cleveland Barrens 584 (Russell County); Clover Hollow 25 (Giles County); Cowbane Prairie 63 (Augusta County); Dameron Marsh 316 (Northumberland County); Deep Run Ponds 668 (Rockingham County); Dendron Swamp 653 (Sussex County); Difficult Creek 819 (Halifax County); False Cape 3573 (City of Virginia Beach); Goshen Pass 936 (Rockbridge County); Grassy Hill 1295 (Franklin County); Grayson Glades 24 (Grayson County); Hughlett Point 204 (Northumberland County); Johnsons Creek 99 (Allegheny County); Mount Joy Pond 274 (Augusta County); Mutton Hunk Fen 412 (Accomack County); North Landing River 3441 (City of Virginia Beach); Northwest River 2245 (City of Chesapeake); Parkers Marsh 759 (Accomack County); Pedlar Hills 522 (Montgomery County); Pinnacle 629 (Russell County); Poor Mountain 925 (Roanoke County); Red Rock Mountain 632 (Smyth County); Savage Neck Dunes 298 (Northampton County); Trower Bayshore 35 (Northampton County); Unthanks Cave 22 (Lee County); Wreck Island 1380 (Northampton County).

- Of these 34 preserves, 11 have public access facilities. These require increasing amounts of maintenance to replace or update facility components (such as gravel roads and parking areas, hiking trails, boardwalks, observation decks, a swinging pedestrian bridge, gates, and signs) as they reach the end of their useful lives.

- DCR-owned natural area preserves with public access facilities include:

Bethel Beach (Matthews County): Gravel parking area; jersey barriers; Chesapeake Bay beach; misc. signs
Buffalo Mountain (Floyd County): Gravel parking area; gravel access road; 0.75-mile hiking trail; misc. signs and gates

Bush Mill Stream (Northumberland County): Gravel parking area; gravel access road; 1.5 miles hiking trail; plastic lumber observation deck; misc. signs

Chub Sandhill (Sussex County): Gravel parking area; hiking/birding trail; wooden nature observation platform; misc. signs and gates

Dameron Marsh (Northumberland County): Gravel parking area; birding trail; wooden approach boardwalk; marsh and Bay observation platform; misc. signs and gates

Goshen Pass (Rockbridge County): 3 miles hiking trails; misc. signs

Grassy Hill (Franklin County): 4 miles hiking trails; gravel access road; misc. signs and gates

Hughlett Point (Northumberland County): Oyster shell surfaced parking lot; wooden board walks; plastic lumber observation decks; 1.5 mile hiking trail; misc. signs and gates

North Landing River (City of Virginia Beach): Gravel parking area; gravel access road; 0.5 mile hiking/canoe access trail; canoe launch dock; misc. signs and gates

Pinnacle (Russell County): Two gravel parking areas; gravel access road; low-water ford crossing Big Cedar Creek; swinging pedestrian bridge crossing Big Cedar Creek; 2-room restroom facility; visitor shelter; 5 miles hiking trails; misc. signs and gates

Poor Mountain (Roanoke County): Gravel parking area with short gravel access lane; 0.3 mile hiking trail; misc. signs

- In addition, three preserves support various types of pre-existing structures scheduled to be demolished during the next five years.

- DCR maintains a fire cache to support its prescribed burning program, with extensive equipment including two wildland fire engines (four-wheel drive trucks equipped specifically for fire management operations). This fire cache consists of a four-bay concrete block building/garage located at the VDOT Richmond facility in Colonial Heights, which is available to DCR via a written agreement with VDOT.

- DCR also maintains three small equipment storage and workshop facilities for its Natural Heritage

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Program, two of which are co-located at VDOT facilities in Salem and Tappahannock, and the third located adjacent to the Suffolk DCR-DSWC office.

AGENCY

- DCR maintains an agency radio system to provide for needed communication between field staff with Conservation Officer duties and other DCR or local law enforcement personnel. STARS implementation will phase out the need for this system.
- DCR maintains handheld radios, operating on DCR frequencies, for purposes of conducting fire management activities, in particular during prescribed burns as well as for law enforcement communication.

VEHICLES

- As of April 16, 2006 DCR owns 403 vehicles and leases 58 vehicles from the Office of Fleet Management/Department of General Services.

The vehicles assignments are as follows:

	Pool Assigned	Agency Owned
Director's Office	1	0
Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance	1	0
Dam Safety & Floodplain Mgt	1	6
Division of Natural Heritage	2	22
Division of Planning & Recreation	7	1
Division of State Parks	20	346
Division of Soil & Water Conservation	25	28

- DCR replacement criterion for all vehicles is the lesser of 10 years or 120,000 miles. Approximately, 37% of agency-owned vehicles are at 10 years old or older and approximately, 56% of the older models have at least 120,000 miles.

- Road and work vehicles, such as dump trucks and pickups used for Park maintenance activities are regularly kept long after the defined vehicle replacement lifecycle.

Factors Impacting Capital Investments

One of the largest challenges to addressing DCR's capital issues is the significant lack of funding to meet the identified capital needs. Providing and maintaining adequate funding will be necessary in order for DCR to properly maintain and continue to grow our State Park System and our Natural Area System.

- DCR will need increased resources if it is to meet maintenance standards to maintain its public access facilities in safe condition for visitors.
- The 2002 Parks and Natural Areas Bond is creating a significant expansion to our Parks and Natural Area Systems that will require public access and facilities development funds. Preventative maintenance funds will also need to be made available.
- The Commonwealth is implementing the Statewide Agency Radio System (STARS), which will replace existing DCR radio systems and affect DCR staff who have vehicle-equipped radios.
- A second (western) fire cache is being planned as DCR increases its capability to use prescribed burning as a necessary tool in managing natural areas. This expansion will require new garage facilities in or near Abingdon or Marion.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Capital Investment Alignment

DCR's capital outlay plan directly supports the agency's mission to "work with Virginians to conserve, protect, and enhance their lands and water and promotes the stewardship and enjoyment of natural, cultural and outdoor recreational resources". Both the State Park System and the Natural Area Preserve System conserve our lands and waters as well as provide stewardship and recreational opportunities on our properties. The buildings and other facilities on our Parks provide opportunities for the public to be both day use and overnight guests on our properties.

Agency Goals

Goal #1:

Meet growing demands on Virginia's award-winning State Parks, while maintaining Virginia's traditional conservation orientation.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

As Virginia's population increases, so does the demand for our award winning state parks. Virginia State Parks are natural preserves where flora and fauna thrive and our park system serves as tonic for the mind, body and spirit for visitors. With this in mind, we are committed to balancing the growing demand for services while remaining faithful to a rich tradition of protecting and conserving these natural resources.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #1

- Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.
- Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.
- Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.
- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.
- Protect the public's safety and security, ensuring a fair and effective system of justice and providing prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.

Goal #2:

Enhance public safety by administering effective dam safety and flood plain management programs.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Dams create impoundments in Virginia to provide waters for drinking and farm water supplies, public recreation and aesthetic purposes, and Virginians need these dams regulated to ensure their safety. DCR protects citizens and lands in Virginia by mapping, identifying, classifying, and regulating dams. Additionally, education of the public and local government promotes compliance with safety requirements and maintenance schedules resulting in increased safety. DCR also works to protect citizens from the impacts of flooding, works to restore stream channels and floodplains to carry the natural flows, and educates citizens about the challenges associated with development within the floodplains.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #2

- Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.
- Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.
- Protect the public's safety and security, ensuring a fair and effective system of justice and providing prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Goal #3:

Improve the quality of Virginia's waters and the Chesapeake Bay through non-point source pollution reduction programs and sound land use management.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Virginia's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay need to be protected from pollution that is generated from run-off that pollutes Virginia's streams, rivers, lakes and the Chesapeake Bay. By promoting sound land use management, Virginia's waterways, and the living systems, economies, and way of life they support, will be protected for future generations.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #3

- Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
- Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.
- Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.
- Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.
- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Goal #4:

Enhance opportunities to participate in natural resource-based recreation opportunities.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Virginia's natural resources provide opportunities for many to experience the outdoors through recreational opportunities. Increased awareness of natural resource recreational possibilities can expand usage.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #4

- Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
- Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.
- Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.
- Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.
- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Goal #5:

Advance the protection, conservation, and stewardship of Virginia's significant natural areas, conservation lands, and natural heritage resources.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

DCR is responsible for ensuring that the natural heritage resource lands are preserved for future generations. Programs that promote good stewardship, conservation, and protection help to ensure that these assets will be preserved for Virginians to enjoy and as an economic asset as a tourist attraction.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #5

- Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
- Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.
- Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.
- Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.
- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

Goal #6:

Be recognized as an employer of choice.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Through effective recruitment, hiring, training, recognition, and rewards, the DCR will ensure the retention of highly-skilled and productive employees.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #6

- Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
- Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

Goal #7:

Provide efficient and effective administrative support.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

DCR's many program units require effective and efficient administrative functions to support the delivery of mission critical products and services. Through increased uses of technology, better process management, and accurate financial reporting, information can be collected from and disseminated to our customers and partners resulting in a high level of customer satisfaction.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #7

- Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.
- Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.